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TESTIMONIALS

IN FAVOUR OF

WILLIAM JOHN ALEXANDER,

B. A. (Lond.), Ph.D. (J. H. U.),

MUNRO PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN
DALHOUSIE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY, HALIFAX, N. S.

AND FORMERLY

FELLOW OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY,

CANDIDATE

FOR

The Professorship of English

IN THE

University of Toronto.

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TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

FOR

The Province of Ontario.

SIR:—

I BEG respectfully to offer myself as a candidate for the Professorship of English in the University of Toronto.

I am a native of Hamilton, Ontario, where I was born in 1855. I received my school education at the Hamilton Collegiate Institute during the principalships of the late late J. M. Buchan, M. A., and of George Dickson, M. A. In 1873 I matriculated in the University of Toronto, ranking First in the department of English, French and History, and Second in General Proficiency—thus winning a Double Scholarship. In the following summer I won the Canadian Gilchrist Scholarship, standing fourth in order of merit among six hundred and fifty-two candidates from Great Britain and the Colonies, at the Matriculation Examination of the University of London, in June of that year.

The three following years (1874-7) I was a student at University College, London, and passed the Examinations for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in the University of London, in the highest Division, and with First Class Honours in English.

In 1877 I returned to Canada, and during two years acted as First Master under Principal Anderson, in Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown, P. E. I. The study of English Literature had always been my favourite and chief pursuit, and I now determined to make that subject the business of my life, with the aim of obtaining a

professorship in English. As no advanced instruction in English Literature proper was to be obtained in any University, either in America or Europe, I determined to continue in private my more direct study of the subject, and to avail myself of university assistance in gaining a wider knowledge of other literatures, especially of those of the classical languages,—which I deemed the best preparation for the study of any literature,—and also in gaining a better acquaintance with scientific Philology.

In accordance with this plan, I entered the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, where I remained as a graduate student during four years. Besides availing myself of what assistance that University offered in English (which was, as far as I was concerned, Anglo-Saxon), I followed courses in Comparative Philology, Latin, and Greek. I was so successful in my studies as to win a graduate Scholarship in the year after my entering, and to be appointed to a Fellowship in Greek in the following year (1881). This Fellowship I held during two years, and then graduated as Doctor of Philosophy, in June, 1883. My graduating thesis is published in the *American Journal of Philology* for October of the same year.

Immediately after graduating, I went to Germany, where I spent a year, engaged mainly in acquiring familiarity, with the German language,—which I had found most important for the prosecution of my philological and literary studies,—and in becoming acquainted with German literature. During this period I was a student at the University of Berlin.

While still in Europe, I was appointed to the Chair of English Language and Literature in Dalhousie College and University, Halifax. In the autumn of 1884, I entered upon my duties here, and have since that date devoted my *whole* time to the teaching and study of my subject, this University being, up to the present year, I believe, the only one in the Dominion which has a Chair for the teaching of English Language and Literature to the exclusion

of all other work. My work here has included courses on Eighteenth Century Literature; on Elizabethan Literature; on Shakespeare and Milton; on the Poetry of the Nineteenth Century; on the Poetry of Robert Browning; on Anglo-Saxon; on the Development of the English Language to Chaucer; on the General Principles of Language Development; on Composition and Style. The course of lectures on Browning is in course of publication in Boston, and I hope to place a copy in your hands before your decision on the present appointment is made.

The following testimonials will give further information as to my success as a student, teacher and lecturer. I have only to add, in conclusion, that, should I be elected to fill this Chair, I will use my utmost endeavours to justify your choice, and to treat the subject of English Literature and Language in a manner worthy of so important a factor in liberal education.

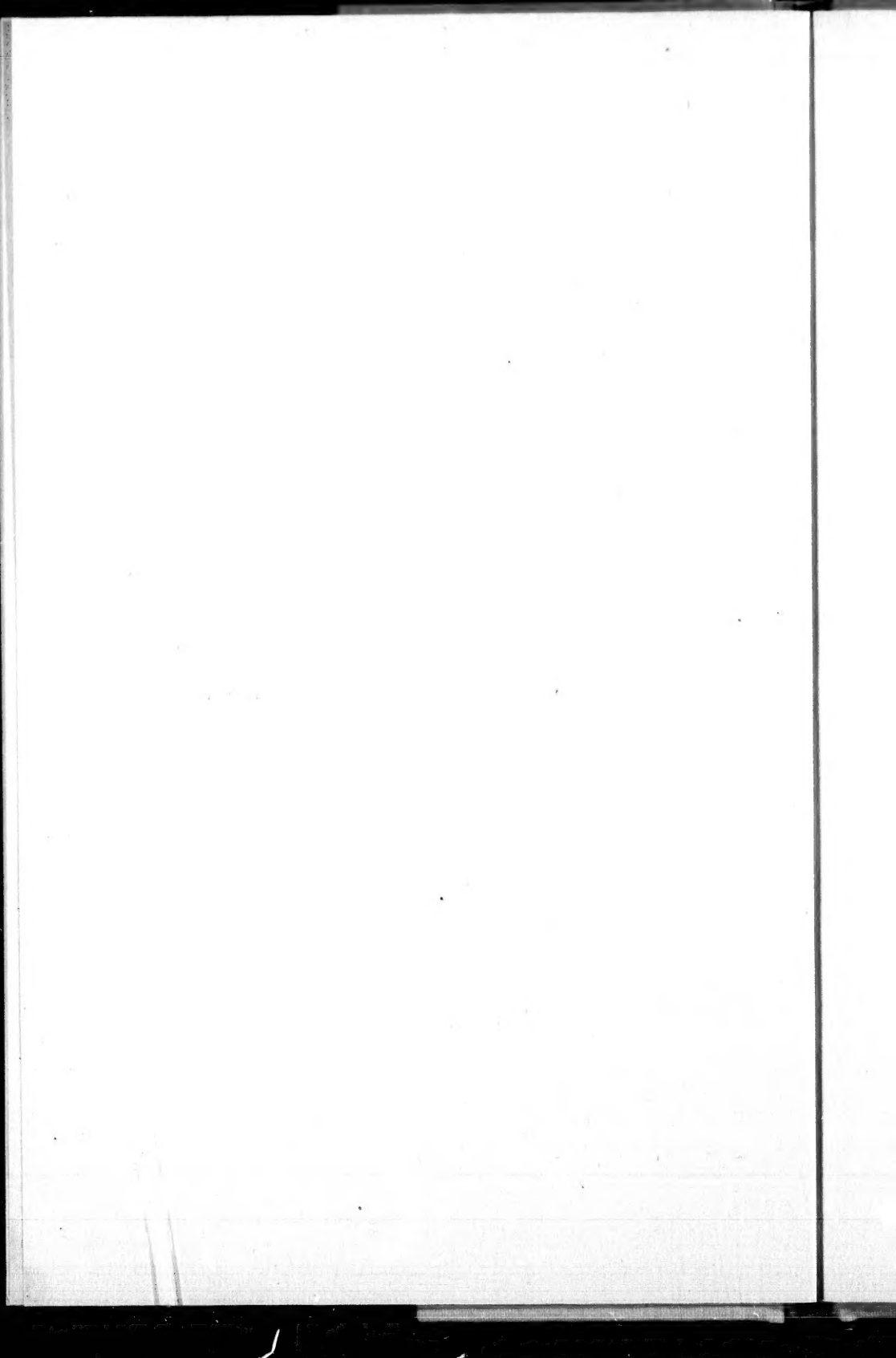
I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your obedient servant,

W. J. ALEXANDER.

DALHOUSIE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY, HALIFAX, N. S. }
November 13th 1888.



TESTIMONIALS.

I.

From GEORGE DICKSON, M. A., *Principal of Upper Canada College.*

UPPER CANADA COLLEGE, TORONTO,
Nov. 2nd, 1888.

I hereby certify that I have known W. J. Alexander, Ph. D., since 1872, when he was a pupil of the Hamilton Collegiate Institute. In 1873 he passed the matriculation examination of the University of Toronto with the highest honours, winning two scholarships, viz:—The First Modern Languages Scholarship, and the Second General Proficiency Scholarship. In 1874 he passed the matriculation examination of the University of London, (Eng.,) winning the Dominion Gilchrist Scholarship offered in that year, and ranking *fourth* among several hundred competitors,—“the highest place attained by a gentleman in the colonies.” After graduating in the Faculty of Arts in the University of London, Dr. Alexander completed a Post-graduate course in Philology and Literature in Johns Hopkins University, obtaining the degree of Ph. D., and subsequently continued his studies at Berlin University. His experience as teacher in the Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown, and as Professor of English and Literature in Dalhousie College, Halifax, qualifies him in a high degree for the position he now seeks. I consider him in all respects well qualified for a professorship in Languages and Literature.

GEO. DICKSON,
Principal U. C. C.

II.

*From ALEXANDER ANDERSON, LL. D., (McGill,) Principal of
Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown, P. E. I.*

PRINCE OF WALES COLLEGE, CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. I.

27th October, 1888.

My acquaintance with Dr. Alexander dates from 1877. From 1877 to 1879 he was associated with me, as one of my assistants, in this Institution. During that period I had ample opportunity to form an estimate of him as a man and a teacher, both from the intimate relationship of private intercourse, and from the discharge of his public duties. Never has it been my fortune to meet with a young man who was possessed of such extensive, varied and accurate literary attainments, and whose acquaintance with English Literature, in particular, was so marvellous. His literary enthusiasm was inspiring, and his power of expression remarkable. I shall never forget the pleasure and profit of our intercourse. His conduct of the classes entrusted to him, especially those in English and English Literature, was most satisfactory. To admirable familiarity with the works of our Literature, he added a thorough scientific knowledge of the Language, and was most successful in imparting instruction to the students under his charge. His manner of teaching was quiet but impressive, his exposition clear and forcible, and the impression made upon the students such as to command respect and win admiration. A man of high character and possessed of such qualities, he had no difficulty in respect of discipline; order followed as a natural consequence.

To our great regret, he left us to prosecute his studies at the Johns Hopkins University. The nine years which have intervened since then, have been years of unremitting

study, and latterly, of professorial work as well, at Dalhousie College, Halifax. Of his success there I must necessarily speak from report; but the universal opinion, as far as I have been able to learn, is most favorable. Many of my students have studied English, both Ordinary and Honour, under him, and I can unhesitatingly express my conviction of their unqualified satisfaction with his management of his subject, and the great benefit they derived from its study under his guidance.

The high hopes I entertained, years ago, of Dr. Alexander's future have not been disappointed; and I feel confident that in a wider sphere of influence, he will in a higher degree realize my most sanguine expectations, and make the Chair of English worthy of its subject, and its work commensurate with the importance which necessarily belongs to a study of universal utility.

ALEX. ANDERSON, LL. D.,

Principal.

III.

From BASIL L. GILDERSLEEVE, PH. D. (Göttingen), LL. D. (Harvard), D. C. L. (University of the South); Hon. Member of the Cambridge Philological Society, and of the Philological Syllogos of Constantinople; Editor of the *American Journal of Philology*; Professor of Greek in the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, BALTIMORE, MD.,

Oct. 19th, 1888.

I understand that Professor W. J. Alexander, now of Dalhousie College, Halifax, is a candidate for the Chair of English Literature in the University of Toronto; and holding him, as I do, in special esteem, I desire to bear my testimony in his behalf.

Professor Alexander came to the Johns Hopkins University as a student of English Literature, and never ceased to be a student of English Literature, although he gradually dropped into the special study of Greek, in which he won a high position, becoming Scholar, then Fellow, and finally taking his Doctor's Degree with a dissertation, which I published in the *American Journal of Philology*, and which has often been cited by Greek scholars. While Professor Alexander did not neglect the technical side of Greek, so to speak, his chief desire was to penetrate into the secrets of Greek literary art, and in my long career as a teacher I have never had a more sympathetic pupil in all that pertains to the æsthetic part of my work; and since he returned to his favorite province of study, as he did shortly after leaving the Johns Hopkins, he has shown in his chosen field the same insight, the same enthusiasm that made me hope so much for his future as a classical scholar.

I am confident that Professor Alexander is doing and will do his work admirably, and I have great pleasure in commending his claims to the careful consideration of the appointing power.

B. L. GILDERSLEEVE,

Professor of Greek in the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

IV.

From DANIEL C. GILMAN, M. A. (*Yale*), LL. D. (*Harvard*)
President of the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, BALTIMORE, MD.,

Oct. 22, 1888.

Professor W. J. Alexander, of Dalhousie College, held a Fellowship in this University from 1881 to 1883, and in June of the latter year received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, his principal subject being Greek, the subordinate Latin. I knew him well during his residence here, and formed a highly favorable opinion of his ability, character, and acquirements. Professor Gildersleeve, who knew Mr. Alexander as a student, has informed me of the testimonial that he has written, and I can only express my concurrence in his estimate.

DANIEL C. GILMAN,

President.

V.

*From J. G. SCHURMAN, M. A., (London), D. Sc., (Edinburgh).
Formerly Examiner in Philosophy and Political Economy in
Toronto University, and Professor of English and Metaphysics
in Dalhousie College, Halifax; Sage Professor of Philosophy
in Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.*

TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION FOR ONTARIO:

SIR,—

In support of Professor W. J. Alexander's candidacy for the Chair of English Language and Literature in Toronto University, I desire to make the following statement:

I first became acquainted with Mr. Alexander in 1875, when, as Canadian Gilchrist Scholars, we met at University College, London, and I have known him intimately ever since. From 1875 to 1877, we were fellow-students in London, and from 1884 to 1886, fellow-professors in Halifax; while our intercourse during the remaining years has been close and uninterrupted. Few men, therefore, could be better known to me; and I venture to assert that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a man, at least of his years, who could make any pretension to the richness, variety, and extent of Mr. Alexander's culture, especially on the literary side. In the years we spent together as students, Mr. Alexander was always surprising me by his knowledge and attainments—scientific, philosophical, and literary—in which, so far as my experience went, he had no equal among the undergraduates of London University. His reading in literature and history was already extensive, and far beyond his years; and, while he naturally took University Honours in English Language

and Literature, he did advanced work in Chemistry and Physiology, read the Greek Dramatists, and joined the class in Kant's *Prolegomena*. He had great capacity for study, and his delight in it was not less.

In the years that have followed, Mr. Alexander has devoted himself more exclusively to literature, but the many-sidedness of his intellectual interests appears to have suffered little, if any, diminution. Still Dr. Alexander is essentially a literary man. A nature like his, however, could not be content with any narrow survey of literature. Accordingly, though his preference has always been for English Literature, (as I know from delightful memories), he has, in the course of four or five years, spent in France, Germany, and Italy, and as Fellow in Greek in Johns Hopkins University, made a wide study of various literatures. As a preparation for a professorship of English Language and Literature, his scholarship is perfectly ideal. To this add his fine literary taste and feeling, his literary appreciation and insight, as delicate as subtle, along with his love of literature, his devotion to its diffusion, his belief in its potency to refine and enoble mankind, and you have a scholar who would adorn any chair of literature in America.

That he is a successful teacher, his record in Dalhousie College attests; and I can also witness to the impression his courses in literature make upon students, one of whom once said to me: "Dr. Alexander's lectures on Wordsworth have been a complete revelation to me, though I thought I knew something of the subject." As a writer, Dr. Alexander cannot fail make a good reputation. His work on Browning, which I read in manuscript over a year ago, I found more helpful than any other of the works yet published on the same subject. His public addresses and lectures have uniformly possessed high literary merits, which always make a demand for them.

As a man, Dr. Alexander has all the virtues and qualities of a gentlemen, in the best sense of that word. With good

common sense, he co-operates wisely and agreeably in the general work of the University.

On the whole it seems to me that as a teacher, a scholar, and a writer,—alike by character, native bent, talents, scholarship, training, and experience,—Professor Alexander is pre-eminently qualified to fill the Chair of English Language and Literature in the University of Toronto—his own university and the university of his native Province.

J. G. SCHURMAN.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY, *Nov. 10th, 1888.*

VI.

From the REV. JOHN CURRIE, D. D., Professor of Hebrew in the Presbyterian College, Halifax, N. S.

I have much pleasure in testifying that I have enjoyed the privilege of hearing two lectures delivered by Dr. Alexander, of Dalhousie College,—one being his Inaugural Address, and the other a popular lecture on "A Study of Browning." Both papers were of a high order of merit, showing an intimate acquaintance with the topics discussed, and displaying a fine literary taste. The Inaugural, which was strictly academic, received unqualified praise from all competent judges; while the lecture on Browning, though on a subject confessedly difficult, and addressed to a promiscuous audience, was heard with profound attention. So far as I know, Dr. Alexander gives entire satisfaction in the class-room, and is quite popular with his students. I may add that during his brief residence in Halifax he has won for himself a host of friends.

JOHN CURRIE, D. D.,

Professor of Hebrew in the Presbyterian College, Halifax.

HALIFAX, N. S., 2nd Nov., 1888.

VII.

*From the REV. ALEXANDER McKNIGHT, D. D., Ex-Moderator of
the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada,
Principal of the Presbyterian College, Halifax.*

DARTMOUTH,

November 3rd 1888.

I have a high opinion of the competency, in his department, and of the scholarly attainments of Dr. Alexander, Professor of English Literature in Dalhousie College, Halifax. I had the pleasure of listening to a public lecture on Browning given by him some time ago, and was interested in the gracefulness and literary finish of the lecturer's own style, as well as in the attractions which he threw around a somewhat arduous study. He fills well the post he at present occupies, and would be equally qualified for any similar position elsewhere.

ALEX. McKNIGHT, D. D.,

Principal of Presbyterian College, Halifax.

VIII.

From JAMES SETH, M. A. (Edinburgh), Formerly Assistant Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh : Munro Professor of Ethics and Metaphysics in Dalhousie College and University.

DALHOUSIE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY, HALIFAX, N. S.

October, 29th, 1888.

I have much pleasure in testifying to Dr. Alexander's eminent success and popularity as a Professor of English Literature; of which, as his colleague here, I have had exceptional opportunities of judging. I know that he has won the respectful regard of his students, and, by the care and enthusiasm which he has brought to bear upon his teaching, has inspired them with a genuine and intelligent interest in his subject. As an indication of this, I may mention that the Faculty recently authorized him, in answer to a strong desire on the part of the students, to give an extra course of lectures—for Third and Fourth Year students,—in addition to his present Ordinary and Honour courses. I may further say that I attended the greater part of a special course of lectures, delivered by Dr. Alexander last sessions; and that I was impressed throughout by his power of lucid exposition, by the breadth and accuracy of his scholarship, and by the delicacy of his literary appreciation. The course was largely attended by outsiders, and was, I know, the means of awakening much interest in the difficult subject of which it treated.

While we should part with Dr. Alexander with deep regret, I feel sure that the same qualities of sterling character, of broad culture, and of peculiar aptitude to teach, which he has shown here, would ensure him a like success elsewhere; and on these grounds I beg to recommend his claims to the favourable consideration of the Government of Ontario in making the present appointment in Toronto University.

JAMES SETH, M. A.,

Munro Professor of Metaphysics and Ethics.

IX.

From the REV. JOHN FORREST, D. D., President of Dalhousie College and University.

DALHOUSIE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY, HALIFAX, N. S.
November 12th, 1888.

Dr. W. J. Alexander, Professor of English Language and Literature in this University, informs me that he is applying for a similar position in Toronto, and asks me for a certificate of the manner in which he has conducted his work while with us. I regret very much that I am called upon to discharge a duty which, while pleasant in itself, is yet ominous of evil to our institution. Still I owe a duty to Dr. Alexander, and must do him justice, even if it should turn to our loss. Dr. Alexander came to us in 1884, and his work since that time has fully justified all the good reports we had previously heard of him. He has conducted with great success, during several winters, popular classes that have attracted a large number of general students who were seeking instruction in English Literature. His best work, however, has been with the regular undergraduate classes. I have noted with pleasure the fact that the better the student, the more highly has he appreciated Dr. Alexander's work. Not only have the young men just entering college profited largely by his instructions, but the Honour students, who have devoted their time specially to the subjects of his department, have found in him a thoroughly competent instructor, and have always been loud in his praises. I consider him a thoroughly competent, faithful, and successful teacher.

His departure from Dalhousie would be a matter of sincere regret to myself and to every member of the Senate. We would all feel that we were parting with a sincere personal friend, as well as an honoured fellow-labourer. Justice to Dr. Alexander compels me to give this certificate; but I hope that Toronto University may find a suitable professor of English in some other quarter.

JOHN FORREST,

President of Dalhousie College and University.

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X.

*From the HON. SIR ADAMS G. ARCHIBALD, K. C. M. G., P. C.,
D. C. L., Q. C., M. P., Chairman of the Board of Governors
of Dalhousie College and University, Halifax.*

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA,
November 20th, 1888.

I understand that Dr. W. J. Alexander, now Professor of English Literature in Dalhousie College, is an applicant for a similar position in the University of Toronto. Dr. Alexander has during his connection with Dalhousie shewn eminent fitness for the position he holds. The Governors have the highest opinion of his qualifications for the position, and would regret very much the loss of his valuable services; but they feel that, however reluctantly they contemplate a severance of his connection with the University, his eminent services to the Institution entitle him to an expression of their high sense of his merits as a professor, and their esteem and respect for him as a man.

ADAMS G. ARCHIBALD,
*Chairman of the Board of Governors of
Dalhousie College and University.*

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